

Lesson Plan #1 for Gamestar Mechanic

Lesson: Video Games as Literature

Teachers: Ms. Shanahan and Ms. Hamm

Course: 7th grade English

Duration: 45 minutes

Learning Objectives

- Students will analyze video games for narrative elements including mood, characterization, setting, conflict, resolution, cause-effect, point of view, pacing, and visual transitions.
 - Students will identify the tools game designers use to tell stories (backgrounds, cutscenes, music, characters, level descriptions, intro screens, outro screens).
 - Students will compare and contrast video game narratives to print narratives.
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Lesson Design

Preparation:

In preparation for the unit, teacher will select clips and/or screenshots from video games that demonstrate narrative principles. The games used for this unit may vary, but all should have a compelling, high-interest story line that illustrates the narrative concepts for the lesson. All graphic organizers and materials for the unit will be prepared and copied in advance.

Prior Knowledge:

Students have analyzed fiction for character, setting, mood, theme, etc. and have demonstrated levels of proficiency (basic through mastery) in applying these concepts to short stories and drama throughout the earlier part of this unit. In the final project for this unit, students will be asked to brainstorm, plan, write, and design an interactive narrative in the form of a video game. This lesson will prepare students for their final project by challenging them to apply their knowledge of storytelling concepts to video games. Prior to the beginning of this unit, students completed a tech and video game use survey to assess prior experience with topics related to gaming. Following this lesson, students will discover the principles of video game design and learn the basics of Gamestar Mechanic, the tool they will use to design their final projects.

Lesson sequence:

Warm Up (3-5 minutes): Ask students to write a short list of similarities between video games and short stories. Teacher will check-in one-on-one with students about last night's survey during this time if needed. Teacher will also assist students who are having difficulty brainstorming by prompting with questions to guide responses. At the end of the warm up, class will review briefly by sharing answers.

Transition (3-5 minutes): Teacher will point out that video games share many of the narrative features of stories, including mood, characterization, setting, conflict, resolution, cause-effect,

point of view, pacing, and visual transitions, and will introduce the classwork for the day by going over the agenda on the class whiteboard.

Guided Practice (30 minutes): Teacher will list literary terms definitions on the smartboard, and class will review briefly. Next, teacher will provide a copy of graphic organizer and explain the organizer. Class will record analyses on the organizer. Then, the class will view selected narrative clips from a video game (for the initial pilot, we will view the intro and selected story scenes from *Zelda, Link to the Past*). Teacher will read all written text on the screen. Class will analyze game based on prior knowledge of narrative technique. Teacher will point out techniques unique to video game design, such as cut scenes, use of color, music, etc.

Closure (5 minutes): Teacher will explain independent practice, and will make initial connections for students about using literary elements in their Gamestar stories

Independent Practice: Students will analyze an additional video game for homework using the same graphic organizer from class (*New Super Mario Brothers Wii*)

Assessment: Students will go over their review in class and, after revising their answers during class discussion, will submit them for teacher review.

Materials:

1. Video game clips or screenshots
2. Graphic organizer for analysis

Video Game Suggestions:

- *Zelda, Link to the Past*
- *New Super Mario Brothers Wii*
- *Myst, Riven, and Myst 3 exile*